

**ABSTRACT**

Methods and systems are provided for using an existing email transfer protocol, such as SMTP, to exchange digital objects in an authenticated manner. The provided methods and systems solve the bootstrapping problem of computer identities for P2P communication by authenticating the exchange of public information. If the electronic mail protocols are strong, in that sending an email message to a given address results in the message reaching that address with a high degree of confidence, then the exchange of public information performed in accordance with embodiments of the invention is confidently authenticated.

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